



2022 MLA RECAP



Since the start of the new year, the BC government continues to build on the important initiatives we announced in the previous year. 2022 saw challenges taking new turns around housing, affordability, health care, and climate change. The pandemic, changing demographics, increasing climate disasters, and rising costs are globally felt and people in BC are showing their ability to weather the storm, show compassion, and adapt, as we reach to build a better BC for everyone.

In what was once again a busy year in the House, our BCNDP government passed 44 pieces of legislation to address critical issues facing British Columbians. Our new Premier, Dave Eby, came out of the gate by taking action with two new pieces of legislation to increase housing supply, and focused on people's safety and security with a "tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime" approach.

We are moving to a more robust health care system, stabilizing conditions to support BC Doctors and introducing new strategies to increase the number of doctors and nurses, while creating new approaches to better serve our growing healthcare needs.

We've helped people with the rising cost of living with provincial rebates and credits.

Our own mandated annual Climate Change Accountability Report shows our collective progress to reaching our 2030 sustainability goals.

Since early last year, our BC Government has been working to support displaced Ukrainians as they settle in places like Courtenay-Comox, after fleeing far from their home country.

On a personal note, my decision in June to not cover my balding head was very freeing. It is my goal to make it easier for people who have conditions like my hair loss, to be comfortable in public. I would like to thank everyone for their support and curiosity about alopecia, especially when they discover that I am not ill or suffering the side effects of chemotherapy.

The Province of BC is removing barriers for Indigenous Peoples exercising jurisdiction over child and family services, becoming the first province in Canada to expressly recognize this inherent right within provincial legislation.

This e-newsletter highlights some of our major legislative provincial highlights from this year.

Helping People with Rising Costs and Improving Quality of Life

For Families with Children

- Starting in December 2022, in addition to the \$350 child care fee reduction, parents in British Columbia saved as much as \$550 more per month for each child they have in participating licensed child care centres.
- Light House Early Learning Centre was the latest addition to the list of growing \$10/day daycare centres in Courtenay-Comox in 2022. Already in 2023, Beaufort ChildCare Centre at NIC is providing \$10/day!
- Your NDP government has invested \$30 million to see 230+ new playgrounds built across BC. We also celebrated 1 year of free transit for kids 12 and under



New Credits and Supports

- In total, 3.5 million ICBC rebates were issued totaling \$396 Million. And the new premier announced that there will be no increase of ICBC rates for the next 2 years.
- \$100 one-time electricity credit for people and businesses to come in January
- This month, eligible individuals receive a maximum of \$164, plus \$42 per child, as part of the BC Affordability Credit.
- In June the minimum wage increased to \$15.65, thanks to this government tying minimum wage to inflation.
- Low-income dental care funding was received by dental care providers to help lower dental care rates for lower-income adults and kids.
- High-cost lenders are now to be licensed if lending at 32% or higher and can have complaints against them investigated.
- We instituted 5 days paid sick leave (NOTE: recall that the year before we had instituted 3 days paid sick leave under COVID)



Increasing quality of life in the Comox Valley

- BC Gaming Grants continue to support capital and operational funding for local nonprofit organizations. At least \$1.5 million was received in Courtenay-Comox for a range of service categories, including nearly \$210,000 to the Comox Valley Art Gallery for improvements to increase access to great art.

Safety and Security for Everyone

Housing

- To counter the overheated housing markets, we introduced consumer protection measures. Bill 44 removes rental strata restrictions and also ends most age restrictions for stratas so young people and families have more options (55+ restrictions remain)



- NIC received provincial funding and additional funding (for increased construction costs) for a new dynamic residence for 217 students and their families to live and learn.
- Last month, 797 youth in care throughout the province received their first \$600 rent supplement.
- The 2022 Budget allocated \$633 million over 3 years to prevent and reduce homelessness in BC, by expanding services, supports, and providing more timely access to services.

- We provided funding for 56 beds during extreme weather conditions to Connect, Community Cares (St. John the Divine) and Pidcock House.
- As of January 1st, 2023, for a fee, home buyers now have 3 days to opt-out of a purchase after an offer has been accepted.

Safety and Mental Health

- The much anticipated FOUNDRY Comox Valley opened its doors in 2022, providing mental health supports, substance use supports, primary care, peer support and more for youth 12-24.
- The new Safer Communities Action Plan will coordinate efforts among mental health experts, policing, and social services. It means stronger enforcement and intervention services, and expanding mental health crisis response teams into more communities so that police can focus on crime, and that people in crisis are met early on by healthcare workers and community members.

Drug Toxicity

I spent 6 months this year on the All-party Standing Committee on Health looking at the toxic drug and overdose crisis. We heard from experts from all corners of the world, medical experts, as well as people and organizations with lived and living experiences of the toxic drug crisis. We made 37 recommendations around harm reduction, prevention and education, treatment and recovery, safer supply, and enforcement and decriminalization.



Tree planting to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the opening of the new Comox Valley Hospital

Strengthening our Health Care

- We have invested an additional \$118 Million to support practicing family doctors
- We developed new incentives for attracting new family doctors to BC
- Doctors' contracts now address the time a doctor spends with a patient; the number of patients a doctor sees in a day; the complexity of the issues a patient is facing; and administrative costs currently paid directly by family doctors.
- Oversight to protect the public seeking medical care took a big step forward with the Health Professions and Occupations Act: new legislation that streamlines colleges and includes new professions and occupations.
- Expanded the scope of practice of pharmacists, paramedics, and first responders. For example, pharmacists can prescribe for minor ailments, and refill regular prescriptions including contraceptives. They also began to provide COVID-19 shots in 2022.



- Recognize credentials for foreign-trained healthcare workers
- New programs to train health care workers on the job
- Making the health care system culturally safer with system-wide reforms
- Increased and increasing spots for future doctors at UBC
- Funding the first steps for the first new medical school in BC in decades to train future doctors at SFU's Surrey Campus.
- Scaling up virtual care in BC to increase access
- Creation of a bursary program for health care assistants to become practical nurses.
- Expanded the vaccine program for flu. Have you had all your free vaccinations?

- With provincial funding of over \$57 million, broke ground on Providence Living Place, Together by the Sea - Dementia Village
- PharmaCare Coverage expanded to medications for ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, severe hypoglycemia, migraines, the treatment of low white blood cell levels, multiple sclerosis, heart failure, and birth control. And more drugs have been added in the first days of 2023!

Climate Action

Climate Change Accountability Report and Clean Energy

- This report provides updates on CleanBC programs to track BC's progress is on track to meet our 2030 emissions targets, cleaner economy goals, and preparations for the impact of climate change. We are making progress as we continue to grow and accelerate the necessary actions to continue to show leadership across the globe. This year, for example, BC became the region with the highest EV uptake in North America, accompanied by our now over 3000 public charging stations. This was aided by new EV rebate announcements this year and the announcement of a new training centre for EV maintenance. Also, our renewable fuels/biofuels use increased by more than 100 million litres and the heat pump rebate program was expanded. We also announced this year that the largest fossil fuel subsidy is being eliminated in our province. The future is becoming greener!

Old Growth and Biodiversity

- Progress on protecting more old growth has also been made this year: Logging of old growth has declined by 42%, from an estimated 65,500 hectares in 2015 to 38,300 hectares in 2021. The area logged in 2021 represents 0.3% of the estimated 11.1 million hectares of old growth in the province. These old growth logging numbers are the lowest on record. In May 2022 there were unprecedented old growth logging deferrals from BC and First Nations.
- This process in forest management also includes a comprehensive program that includes First Nations and supports an economically strong transition for forest workers.

Looking for a Minister? New Ministry?

British Columbia's new cabinet



HONOURABLE
Pam Alexis
Minister of Agriculture and Food



HONOURABLE
Niki Sharma
Attorney General



HONOURABLE
Mitzi Dean
Minister of Children and Family Development



HONOURABLE
Lisa Beare
Minister of Citizens' Services



HONOURABLE
Rachna Singh
Minister of Education and Child Care



HONOURABLE
Grace Lore
Minister of State for Child Care



HONOURABLE
Bowinn Ma
Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness



HONOURABLE
Josie Osborne
Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation



HONOURABLE
George Heyman
Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy



HONOURABLE
Katrine Conroy
Minister of Finance



HONOURABLE
Bruce Ralston
Minister of Forests (and Minister responsible for the Consular Corps of British Columbia)



HONOURABLE
Adrian Dix
Minister of Health (and Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs)



HONOURABLE
Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing



HONOURABLE
Murray Rankin
Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation



HONOURABLE
Dan Coulter
Minister of State for Infrastructure and Transit



HONOURABLE
Brenda Bailey
Minister of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation



HONOURABLE
Harry Bains
Minister of Labour



HONOURABLE
Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Mental Health and Addictions



HONOURABLE
Anne Kang
Minister of Municipal Affairs



HONOURABLE
Selina Robinson
Minister of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills (and Minister responsible for Immigration and Foreign Credentials)



HONOURABLE
David Eby
Premier



HONOURABLE
Mike Farnworth
Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General (and Minister responsible for ICBC)



HONOURABLE
Sheila Malcolmon
Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction



HONOURABLE
Lana Popham
Minister of Tourism, Arts, Culture and Sport



HONOURABLE
Jagrup Brar
Minister of State for Trade



HONOURABLE
Rob Fleming
Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure (and Minister responsible for BC Transit and Translink)



HONOURABLE
Nathan Cullen
Ministry of Water, Land and Resource Stewardship



HONOURABLE
Andrew Mercier
Minister of State for Workforce Development

December 7, 2022





LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

of BRITISH COLUMBIA

GET IN TOUCH

AS ALWAYS, IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS ABOUT ANY PROVINCIAL ISSUE, PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT. WE ARE HERE TO HELP YOU. MY OFFICE CAN BE REACHED AT 250.703.2410 OR RONNA-RAE.LEONARD.MLA@LEG.BC.CA OUR OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY TO THURSDAY 10AM-4PM. IF THE DOOR IS LOCKED, SIMPLY KNOCK OR CALL 250.703.2410 TO GET OUR ATTENTION. FRIDAYS ARE BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

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